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**ARMY PRE-POSITIONED STOCKS:
THE KEY TO OUR RAPID FORCE PROJECTION STRATEGY**

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**Army Pre-Positioned Stocks:
The Key to Our Rapid Force Projection Strategy**

by

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ABSTRACT

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Since the end of the Cold War, our Army has changed from a strategy of forward deployment to one of force projection. Force projection offers many new challenges in fulfilling our role as the world's preeminent land power, prepared to fight and win our nation's wars and maintain full spectrum dominance. The success of our force projection strategy depends primarily on the speed with which combat power can be assembled at a given location. This paper will describe the Army's Pre-positioned Stocks (APS) strategy and assess its role in the Strategic Mobility Triad (SMT), recommend equipment changes to enhance the relevancy of APS, and assess potential new geographic storage sites that are more responsive to the full spectrum of contingencies. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Shinseki, has determined that in order for the Army to maintain its relevance it must be able to rapidly maneuver strategically to be responsive to the nation's needs. In order to be responsive, the Army Vision calls for the capability to put combat forces (a Bde) on the ground anywhere in the world in 96 hours, a division in 120 hours, and five divisions in 30 days. The recommendations of this paper will attempt to offer a strategy that is complementary to key areas of this vision. Finally this paper will provide the reader with a better understanding of the APS and its role in the shaping and response pieces of our National Military Strategy.

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ARMY PRE-POSITIONED STOCKS THE KEY TO OUR RAPID FORCE PROJECTION STRATEGY

We are more and more an expeditionary force; strategic air and sealift complemented by our pre-positioning initiatives must be our number one priority.

GEN John M. Shalikashvili
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff 1995

INTRODUCTION

Power projection is defined as the ability to rapidly and effectively deploy and sustain US military power in and from multiple, dispersed locations until conflict resolution.¹ As the nation's strategic land force, the Army must be prepared to project its forces rapidly, anywhere in the world, prepared to act unilaterally or as part of a joint or combined force, and execute a wide range of missions spanning the spectrum of military operations from humanitarian assistance operations to major theater war.² The Army must be prepared to respond to any requirement and achieve the military objectives established by the National Command Authority. Since the fundamental posture of the Army has changed from forward deployment to power projection, our ability to respond relies entirely on what is referred to as the Strategic Mobility Triad (Figure 1)³ which includes strategic sealift, airlift, and pre-positioned stocks. Each leg of this triad plays an essential role in force projection and requires the right mix of each if we are to project the right force with the right equipment for the operation.

The intent of this paper is not to identify or compare strengths and weaknesses in the Army's Pre-position System as it relates to inventory control, maintenance of the various fleets, equipment modernization, Tables of Organization and Equipment modifications, or how Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration are conducted. Although these are all areas critical to the success of the overall Army Pre-positioned

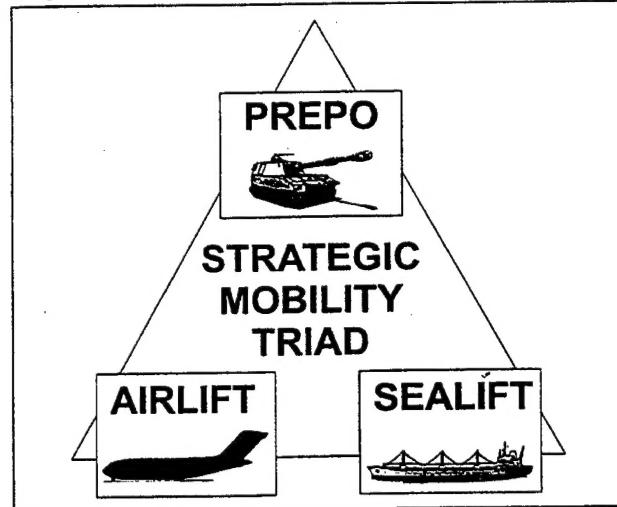


FIGURE 1 - THE STRATEGIC MOBILITY TRIAD – THE KEY TO RAPID FORCE PROJECTION

Stocks program and may be addressed as necessary throughout the paper, the focus will remain on the role of APS in the Strategic Mobility Triad and its relevance to the National Military Strategy to 2010 and beyond. Of particular importance will be to assess what changes, if any, must be made to the APS based on the Chief of Staff of the Army's new timeline requirements for having selected units on the ground prepared to execute a mission.

During peacetime, military operations provide an indirect application of the element of military power as opposed to the direct application of that power required in war. Most of our activities in the peacetime environment are closely coordinated with a wide range of other agencies that are involved with the application of other elements of National power such as political and economic elements. As in any Major Theater War (MTW) scenario, our ability to rapidly deploy the right mix of personnel and equipment to any operation will determine the success or failure of the mission. It is clear that the centerpiece of the Army Pre-positioned Stocks program is, and should remain, the Army Heavy Armor Brigade. As we move toward 2010 and beyond, Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) will continue to increase in number and frequency as will the military's participation in them. If we accept this prediction, then we must also have the capability to respond quickly to the many potential contingencies and be prepared to provide the varying force structures required to bring them to successful resolution. As the only global superpower now and into the near future it will continue to be in our interest to maintain regional stability and relieve pain and suffering whenever possible. As the preeminent land power, our mission will continue to be to deter war and fight and win those wars if necessary.

FROM POMCUS TO PREPO

The Army Preposition Stocks play a vital role in our ability to respond to the many operations facing our forces today. The APS concept is not new and is actually the child of the Cold War era POMCUS (pre-positioning of materiel configured to unit sets) in the central region of Europe and TRU/ARPS (theater reserves in unit sets/Army readiness packages south) in Italy. These programs, POMCUS and TRU/ARPS were the cornerstone of the US strategy for blocking the Soviet military threat to Western Europe. It was also the key to the M + 10 Essential Force that was required to meet our ten divisions in ten days strategy.⁴ During the Cold War it was clear that an attack by Warsaw Pact forces could only be countered in one of two ways; increase an already sizeable forward presence or preposition equipment identified for specific units that could rapidly deploy and fall in on the designated materiel. Obviously the most politically and economically viable solution was pre-positioning of materiel. With the down sizing of the force and the end of the Cold War, it became obvious that maintaining this large forward-based set of equipment was no longer feasible or necessary. Today the probability of a major conflict in Central Europe is low. The draw down of the equipment in Europe to just three brigades and the addition of other storage sites worldwide, including assets afloat are what make up today's APS.

One of the primary lessons learned from the Gulf War was that the US needed to have the ability to rapidly put a credible heavy force on the ground immediately at the onset of hostilities or just prior to. This was necessary to demonstrate US resolve in the region, build confidence in our coalition partners, and provide a deterrence from any future aggression. In 1992, based on those lessons learned from the Persian Gulf War, Congress mandated a study of strategic mobility requirements for the post Cold War Army.

The Army must provide a Corps of five Divisions that is tailorable, sustainable, and with airborne, vertical insertion capability. The lead Brigade must be on the ground by C+4, the lead Division by C+12. Two heavy Divisions (sealifted) arrive from CONUS by C+30 (Armored, Mechanized, Air Assault, [mix per CINC]. The full Corps (five Divisions and a COSCOM) closes by C+75. A fully supported heavy combat Brigade, with sufficient supplies to sustain the Corps until lines of communication are established, must be pre-positioned afloat.

Mobility Requirements Study
Bottom-Up Review Update

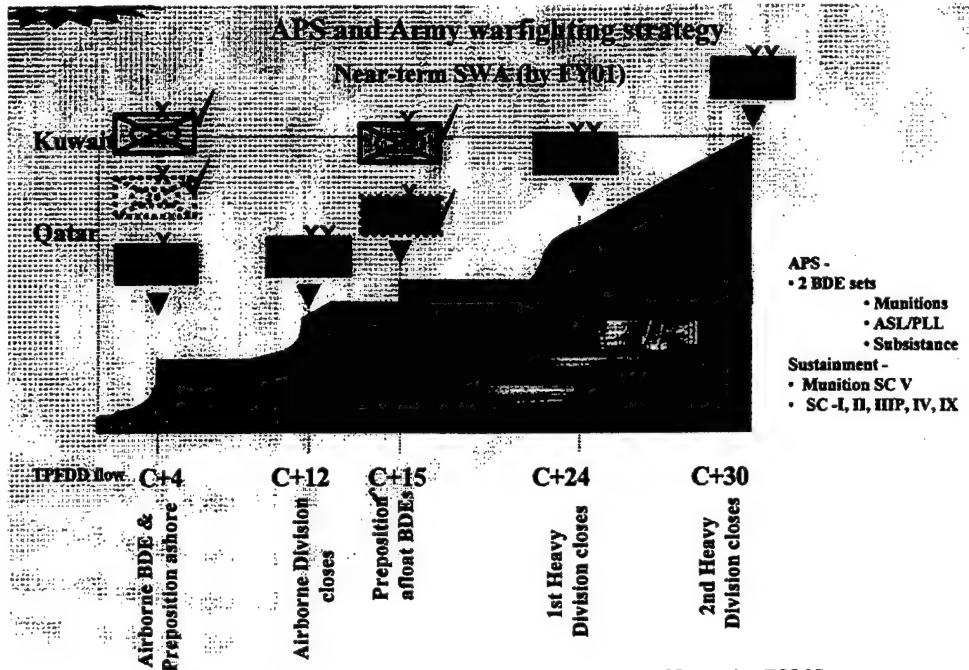


FIGURE 2 - THE OLD TIMELINE

The Army's ability to meet the requirements of the MRS clearly rests with the ability of the Strategic Mobility Triad (SMT) to meet the Army timelines. Since the Army controls neither, strategic sea or airlift, their ability to impact these timelines rests solely in the success of the APS program. The Army's leg of the SMT is pre-positioned equipment and selected stocks forward staged at selected contingency sites as well as equipment pre-positioned afloat.

Regardless of what the future holds, the Army must be sized, sustained, and positioned to provide the flexibility necessary to defeat any enemy in more than one theater.⁵ This strategy is commonly referred to as the near two simultaneous Major Theater War (MTW) strategy and is at the very heart of the APS strategy. The key to maintaining that ability lies in our ability to meet our force deployment objectives as stated in the 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review (Figure 2).⁶ We must maintain the capability to move 50 million ton-miles per day by strategic airlift and a surge sealift capacity of 10 million square feet, relying primarily on the fast sealift ships, large medium-speed roll-on/roll-off (LMSR)

vessels and the Ready Reserve Force.⁷ The QDR also calls for an afloat pre-positioned cargo capacity of four million square feet for both the Army and the Marines with a complementary land-based pre-positioned equipment. This land based pre-positioned stocks currently includes, for the Army, six brigade sets – three in Europe, two in Southwest Asia, and one in Korea. These pre-positioned stocks include selected sustainment stocks as well.

THE ARMY WAR RESERVE PROGRAM

In May 1992, ownership of all Army War Reserves materiel was transferred from the various warfighting Commanders-in-Chief (CINC) to Headquarters, Department of the Army. This policy was established to de-link the use and ownership of this materiel from specific commanders and create a common user stockpile of equipment and supplies that could support the requirements of the Army as a whole. These stocks are now under the heading of "Army War Reserves" (AWR) and are made up of Army War Reserves Sustainment (AWRS), Army War Reserves Operational Projects (AWROP), and Army War Reserves Pre-positioned Sets (AWRPS). Finally HQ DA directed US Army Materiel Command (AMC) as the command responsible for management and accountability of all equipment and supplies except Class VIII Medical.⁸ Responsibility for the command and control as well as the management and accountability within AMC has been given to the Army War Reserve support Command (AWRSPTCMD) located at Rock Island, IL.

AWR pre-positioned stocks (AWRPS or APS) and sustainment stocks now fall under one category called AWR stocks.⁹ Today AWR equipment authorizations consist of seven AWRPS stored worldwide with efforts underway to add an eighth set. The magnitude of the AWR program exceeds 15 billion dollars in major and secondary items. The afloat mission is expanding to a sixteen-ship fleet able to store equipment in over two million square feet of deck space.¹⁰ These stocks are currently categorized into five regional groups managed by the AWRSPTCMD as follows:

AWR-1

AWR-1 encompasses stocks in the continental United States; these are stored at depots and managed by the AMC commodity commands (such as US Army Missile Command, or the Soldier Support Command). The US Army War Reserve Support Command has responsibility for the ammunition portion AWR-1 and stores and maintains these stocks.

AWR-2

AWR-2, the European stocks, which includes storage sites in Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, and Norway contain two Brigade sets in the central region, both consisting of two Armor and one Mechanized Battalion (2X1), and one 2X2 Brigade set located in Italy. In addition to the Brigade sets, there are also operational project stocks, ammunition, selected engineer equipment geared toward bridging operations, and a Force Provider Package.¹¹ In addition to the 2X2 Brigade set in Italy, there

are also selected humanitarian stocks stored primarily for the Department of State, Office of Foreign Disaster Relief.¹² Some of the items include; tentage, plastic sheets, water cans, and blankets.

AWR-3

AWR-3, the Army's Pre-positioned equipment afloat (APA), is the one most thought of when assessing the role of the Army in the Strategic Mobility Triad. APA ships are available for employment in support of any contingency across the range of military operations. It is important to note that the APA equipment does provide the Combatant Commander a "reinforcement capability to enhance an established lodgement." It does not provide the equipment necessary to support an amphibious assault operation – a mission of the US Marine Corps.¹³ The APA contains a 2X2 heavy brigade or armored cavalry regiment and the associated combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) equipment. It also contains a robust CSS package that includes additional transportation assets, a terminal services company for port operations, and a corps support group. These additional CSS assets are included because of the unique requirements of ship off-load, port, and onward-movement operations.¹⁴

AWR-4

AWR-4, contains a 2X1 heavy brigade set in Korea and sustainment stocks in Japan. The AWR-4 management cell in Korea administers the planning and execution of the AWR-4 program.¹⁵

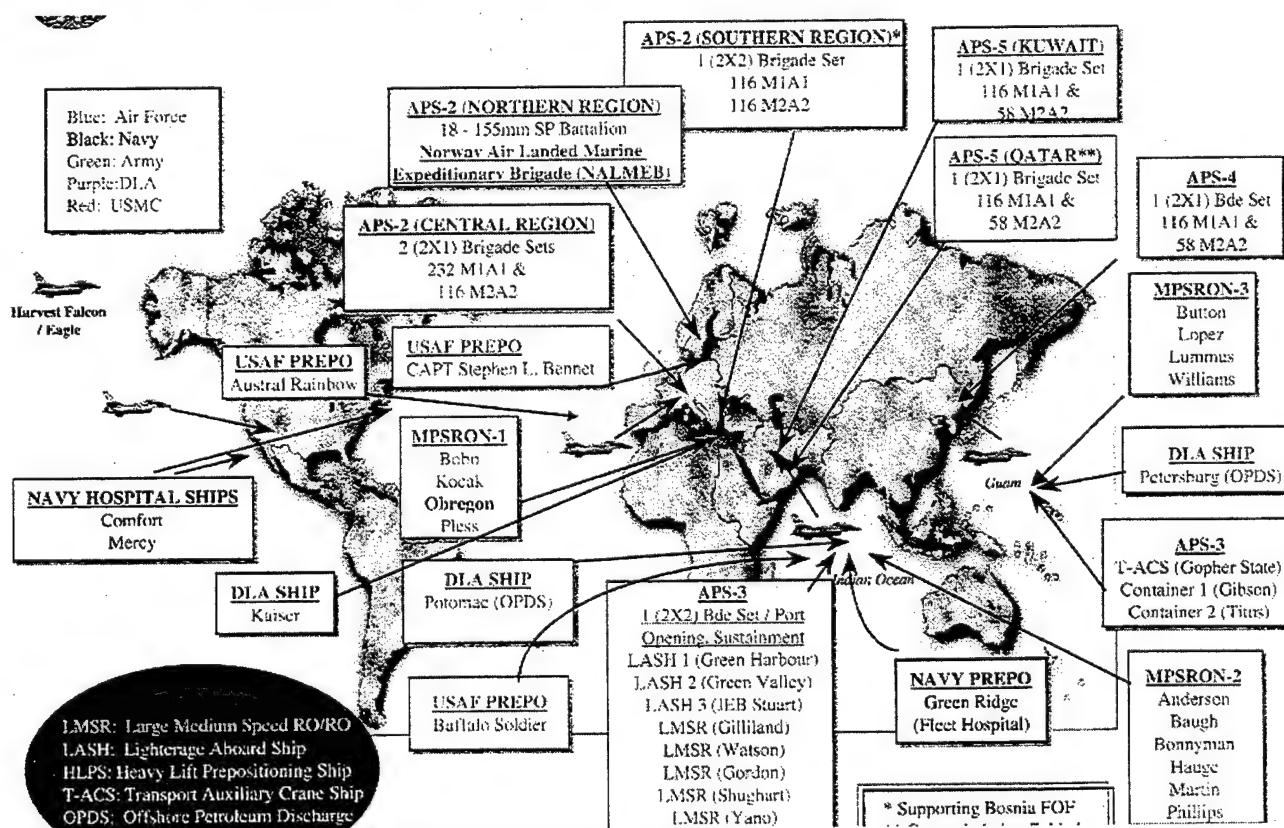


FIGURE 3 - PRE-POSITIONED ASSETS ARE A JOINT STRATEGY

AWR-5

AWR-5 is the pre-positioned set in Southwest Asia. This set consists of a 2X1 heavy brigade set with sustainment stocks in Kuwait, a 2X1 heavy brigade set and a divisional base set with sustainment stocks in Qatar, and an operational project stock (hospital) in Bahrain. The AWR-5 represents the Army's most extensive pre-position effort to date. Under current timelines, this set is the only one potentially capable of supporting the deployment of an entire heavy combat division on the ground ready to fight in fifteen days, which exceeds the requirement of a heavy division on the ground by C+24. This assumes that the AWR-3 (afloat) set can be deployed, off-loaded, and issued within the required times established for response by this set. Given this current "best case" scenario, it is still well short of the division on the ground in five days required by the CSA.

As indicated in Figure 3, the Army pre-positioning strategy is only a part of our overall force projection strategy. The Army has the largest piece of this strategy, but as you can see it is truly a joint effort.¹⁶

A NEW VISION FOR THE ARMY – A COMPRESSED TIMELINE

In order to meet the CSA's vision of a brigade in 96 hours, a division 120 hours, and five divisions in 30 days, we must re-think our force projection strategies. We will continue to rely on the Strategic Mobility Triad to make these timelines possible. Clearly the only way to accomplish this is to find the right mix of sealift, airlift and pre-positioning. Although speed is of the essence, we cannot reasonably expect to see, in the near term any great increase in the production of strategic airlift assets (C-5 and C-17 aircraft). If we are to be successful in rapid force projection in the long term, then we must re-look our long-term acquisition strategy in the number and types of aircraft we purchase in the future. To meet the CSA's vision, practical near term solutions must be applied. The other two legs of the SMT offer our best chance in meeting this vision and providing rapid response not only for MTW, but for the wide range of contingencies we face.

As previously discussed, there is currently one brigade set and selected CS and CSS assets allocated to pre-positioned stocks afloat. Another brigade set will be positioned by next fiscal year along with the newest in LMSR ships. Current acquisition strategy has 19 of the LMSR vessels being procured and built. Eight of these vessels will be will join the Afloat Pre-positioning Force; the ships currently at sea in that role will return to the Ready Reserve Force. The other 11 vessels will be strategically located in the United States and maintained in a reduced operating status similar to that of the fast sealift ships with partial crews.¹⁷ If three of these new LMSR vessels were assigned to the APA Program, then an additional 2X1 heavy combat brigade set could be added to this pre-positioned force. This addition would essentially provide the basis of a heavy division afloat. Obviously, command and control and headquarters elements would have to be airlifted into those theaters not pre-positioned with these assets.

IS A MEDIUM FORCE THE ANSWER

In a recent article in "Army," December 1999, the authors address the fact that the Army can no longer count on operations taking place where the United States has forces or equipment pre-positioned. Although equipment sets have been pre-positioned ashore and afloat in Southwest Asia and Northeast Asia, the recent Kosovo crisis and past crises such as Somalia clearly demonstrate that the Army has to improve its deployability.¹⁸ The authors go on to argue that the Army could take several courses of action between now and the end of the decade to provide a powerful and rapidly deployable force, but that the Army's near-term focus should be on the creation of medium forces. The current Army configuration is that of a barbell, on one end we have our heavy forces, and on the other our light. The need for a rapidly deployable, lethal medium force is what is need to fill the gap.¹⁹

Although I do not dispute our need for a rapidly deployable, lethal, medium force, I disagree with the idea of haphazardly establishing and equipping a medium force with a mix of existing technologies as the primary means to meet the CSA's vision of decreasing deployment time lines. The establishment of an effective medium force should be well thought out and properly equipped. But, even with the establishment of this [medium] force, there still is significant airlift shortfalls and strategic air priorities that must be addressed in order to meet the CSA's time lines. Obviously, the ideal solution to the rapid deployment problem is unlimited strategic airlift assets – one we can hardly expect to see, and one in which the Army has no control. The only leg of the SMT that the Army is able to influence is pre-positioned stocks, and it is in this area that the Army must develop its near-term solution while the medium force is properly developed

PRE-POSITIONING STRATEGY

There are a number of concepts being considered in the near term as well as projected in the future that will contribute to the resolution of the rapid response dilemma. The Army must re-evaluate its pre-positioning strategy to ensure that it remains relevant through the first quarter of the 21st Century. As long as the United States remains the only super power, Small Scale Contingencies (SSC) and other MOOTW operations will continue to dominate our focus instead of the MTW. No longer can the Army base its entire Pre-positioning strategy on the two MTW strategy. The two MTW strategy will continue to evolve and be refined and will remain the driving force behind the Army's Pre-positioning and acquisition strategy, but it must be more if it is to effectively meet the requirements of our National Military Strategy.

The Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) budgets will most likely continue to shrink (planners certainly can't hope for any significant increase). Since an increase in the acquisition of new systems is unlikely, the best we can hope for is that current fielding rates will remain constant. The financing of the Army's medium brigade will have come about not with new dollars, but with dollars taken from the fielding other Army systems. The competing demands for strategic and intra theater lift will at best remain

constant, but more likely will increase. The combined effect of all these factors offer a stiff challenge to the Army's ability to respond to the full spectrum of contingencies.

As the Army goes about the development and transformation to its Objective Force through the Interim Brigade, the current force must remain strategically responsive and dominant at every point on the spectrum of operations.²⁰ The CSA has decided that in order to accomplish this, we must shrink the timelines for deployment, reduce our logistical footprint, and develop the Interim Brigade. All of this together will enhance the Army's ability to be responsive, deployable, agile, versatile, lethal, survivable, and sustainable.²¹ The APS strategy is the key not only during the transition to the objective medium force, but as a long-term solution to the response piece of our National Military Strategy. Current strategy still requires the Army be prepared to respond to the two MTW strategy, but there is tremendous room to maneuver within the APS configurations and locations that will move us toward meeting the CSA vision and keeping the Army as the primary instrument of response.

Another ChallengePower Projection Yesterday & Tomorrow

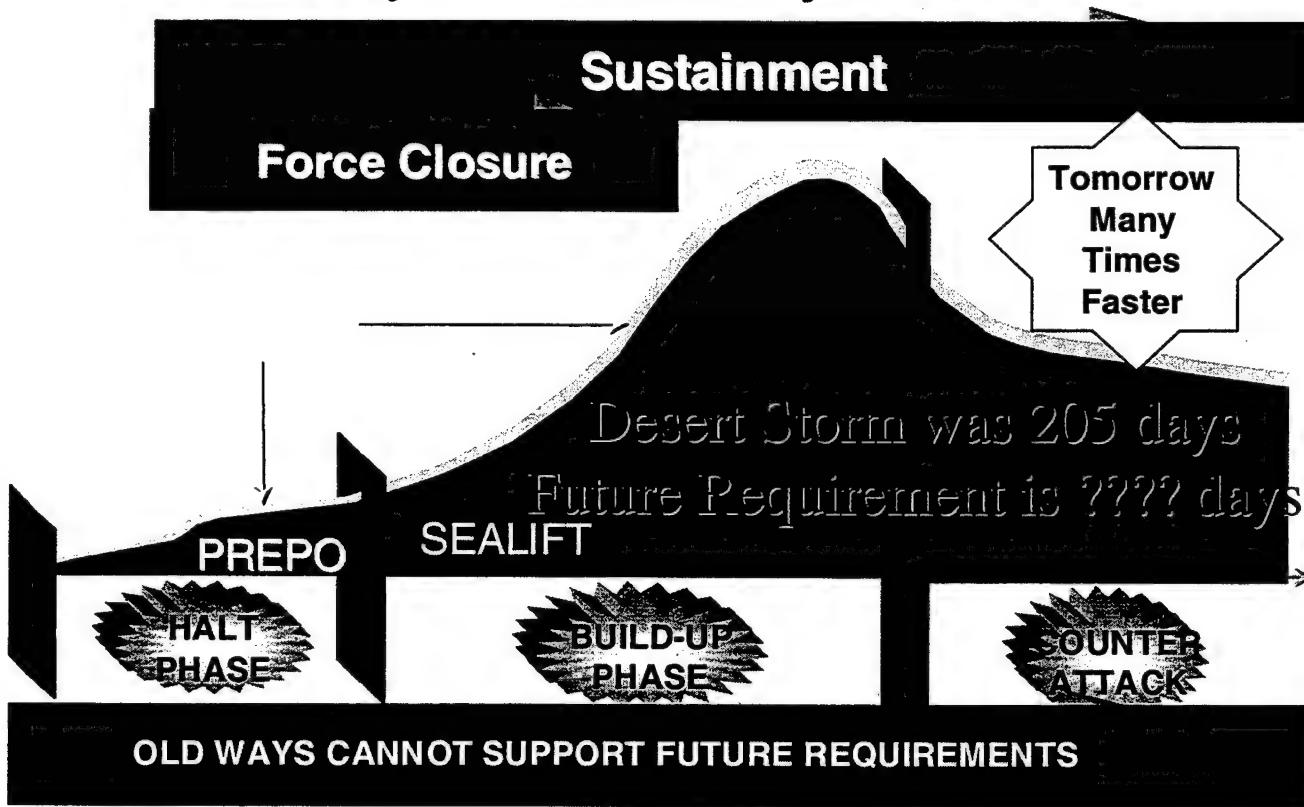


FIGURE 4 - THE TRANSITION FROM OLD TO NEW

RECONFIGURE AND RELOCATE

When we consider the various locations of the APS, one location in particular stands out as totally out of sorts with current and potential areas of conflict. That location is APS-2 (Central Europe) and the three brigade sets located there. Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact, the threat to Western Europe by a large conventional land force has all but disappeared. Yet the Army maintains nearly a division's worth of combat equipment in various stages of readiness, spread in locations from Belgium to Italy. Although actions have been underway to draw down some of this equipment and get rid of the excess, there still remains large quantities of equipment that have little strategic importance. Portions of this equipment have been used, however in support of peacekeeping and humanitarian operations such as those in the Balkans. As previously mentioned the State Department maintains selected stocks of humanitarian items in Italy and selected military vehicles and engineer equipment have been issued to both military units and contractors in support of the Balkan operations.

It must be understood that in many cases our pre-positioning strategy has as much to do with the political or shaping strategy as it does with the response strategy. This is clearly the issue in our APS-2 strategy. I do not suggest the complete removal of pre-positioned stocks from Europe, but rather a reconfiguration and re-location of selected assets. The expansion of NATO and the European Union offers some excellent opportunities for engagement and pre-positioning strategy with some of the new Eastern European members. The pre-positioning of humanitarian and nation building types of equipment (primarily engineering assets, HMMWV, and cargo trucks) in countries such as Hungary, Poland, Greece, and Turkey can pay major dividends in shortening timelines required to meet many of the contingencies regularly faced in this area of vital interest to the United States. This strategy is in keeping not only with our overall strategy of rapid force projection across the full spectrum, it demonstrates US resolve and commitment in these areas. One heavy brigade/armored cavalry regiment set (2x2) is sufficient to meet any contingency in Europe and demonstrate US resolve and commitment there. The remainder of the combat equipment should be designated as sustainment stocks in those theaters identified as MTW theaters as well as to fill shortages in other APS locations.

NEW TECHNOLOGY

This paper has primarily addressed a few potential solutions to rapidly respond to high intensity conflicts worldwide, but has only addressed the ability to rapidly respond to the wide range of MOOTW on a regional basis. There are a number of existing technologies which, if properly exploited, would enhance and provide a tremendous amount of additional capability to rapidly respond across the entire spectrum of operations. Denmark has developed a vessel designed to accommodate interchangeable equipment pods containing state-of-the-art naval weapons, surveillance equipment, and various other mission specific packages.²² The vessel known as the Standard Flex 3500 (SF 3500) was developed specifically to act as a multi-role ship to support wide-ranging peace –support operations.²³ The SF 3500 can be easily configured to meet various peace related operational requirements. Its design includes heliport

operations capability for various sizes of helicopters, and has rear and side roll-on/roll-off (RORO) capability. The most significant design capability is the seven positions that can be quickly outfitted with containerized suites specifically configured for a wide range of operations.²⁴

The U.S. Coast Guard has expressed an interest in this type of vessel, but it is clear that its potential application for projecting forces in support of a wide range of MOOTW is great. Two ships of this type strategically located with a mix of containers configured for a wide range of operations, positioned both on board and in designated ports, could have a tremendous impact on our ability to react to MOOTW in a timely manner.

A DIVISION AFLOAT

APS-3 (Afloat) has the greatest potential in meeting the early requirements of the rapid force projection strategy described by the Chief of Staff Army in his vision. This set currently has the capability of putting a heavy brigade set (2x2) with a Corps Support Group (CSG) on the ground in 15 days (if appropriate port facilities are available). Near term strategy has this set scheduled to increase to two brigade sets (configured as a 2x1 set and a 1x2 set). This strategy will be accomplished by the phasing out of the older ships supporting APS-3 and the addition of the new Large Medium Speed Roll On/Roll Off (LMSR) vessels. As previously discussed, current acquisition strategy has 19 LMSR vessels being procured and built. Current strategy has eight of these vessels going to the Ready Reserve Fleet to help offset surge lift shortfalls. The placement of three to four of the LMSR vessels in the APS-3 would provide adequate storage area for an additional brigade set which has the potential effect of bringing the set up to a division size equivalent of heavy equipment. There would also be additional storage area for limited quantities of humanitarian/nation building items of the type recommended for addition to the APS-2 in Europe which would enhance the APS-3's ability to rapidly respond to and support full spectrum operations.

The additional LMSR vessels required to bring about the enhanced capabilities of the APS-3 (afloat) may initially reduce our overall surge capability of the RRF, but the replacement of the LMSR vessels by the older ships originally assigned to the APS-3 fleet will off-set this shortfall. The long-term affect will be a reduction in initial RRF surge requirements for Army strategic lift by having more equipment forward positioned that does not require strategic lift to the theater of operations.

An area of greater concern is the limited availability of ports capable of supporting off-load operations of the APS-3. The addition of the LMSR vessels greatly increases our storage capacity and the speed with which we can respond to contingencies, but without additional logistics over the shore (LOTS) assets and training we could potentially end up with a bunch of "stuff" floating around providing no help where needed.

Although the Army is in a transition phase, the development of the Medium Brigade, it must maintain its capability to provide the most lethal and survivable forces (heavy forces), and rapidly deployable multi-capable forces (light forces) in the world. Even with the development and fielding of the

Objective Force, the Army will still be required to maintain full spectrum capabilities into the foreseeable future if we are to maintain our Army as the dominant land power in the world. The new medium force will enhance our force projection capabilities by enabling us to rapidly place a lethal survivable force on the ground quickly anywhere in the world. But there will remain; however, the requirement to have equipment strategically positioned globally to rapidly respond to any crisis that may be a threat to our national interests.

There are no quick fixes to the challenges of the CSA vision in relation to the problems facing our rapid power projection force. Our strategy must be clearly defined, yet leave no gaps in our ability to effectively respond to any contingency across the entire spectrum of operations. As we move toward an objective force over the next ten years, we must maintain the capability of responding to the two MTW strategy, but in a much more compressed timeline. We have little hope of realizing any significant increase in strategic airlift, at least not one that will allow us to put a division on the ground in five days. Our only realistic hope of coming anywhere near the CSA vision, is to improve on our current pre-positioned strategy by making it more relevant to the spectrum of operations we are most likely to face in today's geostrategic environment.

The fundamental posture of the Army has changed from forward deployment to power projection. The Army must be capable of full spectrum dominance possessing a power projection capability sufficient to ensure everything from humanitarian support to force projection of combat units in a conflict. Power projection presents the Army with a range of problems and challenges.....FM 100-17-3

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